

Online Research @ Cardiff

This is an Open Access document downloaded from ORCA, Cardiff University's institutional repository: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/134162/>

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted to / accepted for publication.

Citation for final published version:

Farmer, Natalie 2020. "We're in this together". The British Student Doctor Journal 4 (2) , pp. 64-65. 10.18573/bsdj.193 file

Publishers page: <http://doi.org/10.18573/bsdj.193>
<<http://doi.org/10.18573/bsdj.193>>

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite this paper.

This version is being made available in accordance with publisher policies.

See

<http://orca.cf.ac.uk/policies.html> for usage policies. Copyright and moral rights for publications made available in ORCA are retained by the copyright holders.



“We’re in this together”

REFLECTIONS

AUTHOR

Natalie Farmer

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust

Address for Correspondence

Natalie Farmer
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust
Royal Hallamshire Hospital
Glossop Road
Broomhall
Sheffield, S10 2JF

Email: natalieonezero@aol.com

No conflicts of interest to declare

Accepted for publication: 16.04.20

Doctors at the start of their careers are now facing the biggest medical crisis of the century. Natalie Farmer, a Foundation Year One Doctor and Research Editor at The BSDJ, shares how her team is finding hope in difficult times.

It’s funny how so much can change in such a short space of time.

This time last year, I lived in a completely different city. Woke up, went to placement at the hospital, got home, revised, repeated. I was mentally exhausted, permanently grumpy, and desperately missed my loved ones who lived more than 120 miles away.

Now, I would give anything to go back to those bleak times. At least jumping on a train was an option, no matter how inconvenient it seemed at the time.

I started working as a junior doctor in August last year. It’s tough at the best of times, but at the moment feels impossible. A global pandemic was never something that I envisioned happening at any point during my medical career – especially not in my FY1 year, when I’m still learning the basics. I am constantly being exposed to high risk patients, all of which tend to be very unwell, given that I work in geriatric medicine. As a junior, I can’t help but feel hopeless, like anything that I do will make absolutely no difference to the outcome.

Of course, ‘curing’ a patient is not always possible or the right thing to do. One thing that I have learned from treating the elderly population is that sometimes, making someone comfortable is the kindest act of all. Holding someone’s hand could be preferable to antibiotics. A nasal cannula is less fear-inducing than a non-rebreathe mask.

COVID-19 has forced all of this to the forefront of the frontline. DNACPR forms are rife, with a patient’s swab status being the first question asked at handover. There’s an expectation that the NHS will not be able to withstand the immense pressures being piled on its shoulders. It all sounds very grim.

But actually – it’s not.

The claps I hear every Thursday tell me that it's not, as do the unbelievably supportive messages from my friends and family. The number of kind gestures from both large and small businesses tells me that there's still hope. The way that the country is pulling together to support the NHS says more than any statistic ever could.

There's no doubt that work for healthcare professionals has changed over these past weeks, but not necessarily for the worst. There's a sense of camaraderie like never before and I feel like part of a big, dysfunctional family.

To all the final year medical students coming to join us: welcome. As scary as it seems, everyone within the NHS is so grateful for you and you will all fit in within no time. Before you start, brush up on your history-taking and ABCDE assessments. But also remember that we're all here to help if ever you need it. You are not alone.

We're coping. We can do this. We're in it together.

This was first published on 16 April 2020 as part of the 'Coronavirus: Stories from the Frontline' blog, an online series run by The British Student Doctor Journal. Throughout the pandemic we shared the stories of healthcare workers and students tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. You can find the full series on our website: www.bdsj.org.uk/covid19



The British Student Doctor is an open access journal, which means that all content is available without charge to the user or his/her institution. You are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles in this journal without asking prior permission from either the publisher or the author.

bsdj.org.uk



/thebsdj



@thebsdj



@thebsdj

[Journal DOI](#)

10.18573/issn.2514-3174

[Issue DOI](#)

10.18573/bsdj.v4i2



The **British Student Doctor** is published by **The Foundation for Medical Publishing**, a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales (Charity No. 1189006), and a subsidiary of **The Academy of Medical Educators**.

This journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. The copyright of all articles belongs to **The Foundation for Medical Publishing**, and a citation should be made when any article is quoted, used or referred to in another work.



Cardiff University Press

Gwasg Prifysgol Caerdydd

The British Student Doctor is an imprint of Cardiff University Press, an innovative open-access publisher of academic research, where 'open-access' means free for both readers and writers.

cardiffuniversitypress.org